







Goya

GREAT ART OF THE AGES

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(Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes)

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ON THE COVER: *THE SECOND OF MAY, 1808, AT MADRID*

MILTON S. FOX, *Editor-in-Chief*

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THE SLEEP OF REASON PRODUCES MONSTERS

Etching from THE CAPRICES

About 1789

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Goya

(1746-1828)



A CENTURY AND A HALF AGO, one of the world's greatest painters was at work in Madrid. He was fifty-eight, and he was to live to be eighty-two. He could look back on a brilliant success, yet his profoundest achievements lay ahead. He could peer into a century which promised the overthrow of all he had known. Spain was drifting deeper into pointless wars. The new freedom promised by revolutionary France spelled conquest when it came. Suffering and violence were reducing humanity to its most elemental impulses, and a frenzied will to live sprang phoenix-like from the bare Spanish ground. Goya summed up the national mood: somber and brooding, turbulent and passionate, he stood for his people.

He had found favor with royalty. He had decorated palaces and designed tapestries that shrouded

the follies of a vanishing masquerade. He had lived to see behind the mask—but no man had ever taken the mask at face value more willingly than the young Goya who came to the capital in 1763 to seek his fortune. He had grown up in the northern city of Saragossa; he was provincial, naïve, and stubborn. His circumstances were narrow—his father a gilder, his mother claiming noble descent and dowering her children (like many wives of unsuccessful men) with a threadbare pride. In Madrid the young artist proceeded, legend to the contrary, with the laborious caution of a peasant. He studied with a conventional painter, Bayeu, and aspired to learn the trade of painting and to decorate churches in the grand manner. He followed in Bayeu's footsteps, and eventually he married the sister of his influential teacher.



COLOSSUS
Etching
The Metropolitan
Museum of Art,
New York

Church commissions first materialized in Saragossa, and later Goya decorated important churches in Madrid. This work used up much of his energy and led to family quarrels and disappointments, but it was the least important of his major efforts. His religious art was not religious—at best it was theatrical: his angels were earth-bound flesh and blood.

Goya's brother-in-law now found him long-term employment: the Royal Tapestry Factory of Santa Barbara needed designs to be translated into tapestries. In three years Goya produced over thirty paintings for this purpose. Based on Spanish scenes, they had all the verve and unreality of eighteenth-century opera. The Tapestry Factory brought Goya a salary, and he purchased that rare thing in Madrid, a carriage. The tapestry manufacture was under royal patronage, and suddenly Goya was presented to the King. He was dazzled by this turn of events.

Goya was thirty-six when in 1782 he painted his first dated portrait. But the next year he was painting the Prime Minister, and soon he was invited to paint the family of the King's nephew. Royal and ducal favors followed, opening a decade of rushed com-

missions. Brilliance, elegance, intensity: the distant French court set the tone—the men, with their stars and orders, bewigged after the French fashion; the women wearing the headdress, and the soft fichu held with a brooch, of Marie Antoinette.

Meanwhile a deep political unrest fractured the mirrored surfaces. Revolution in France disrupted the diversions of aristocracy all over Europe. It was a moment for genius to deepen or fade. Goya now lived through a personal crisis which closed the door on the success he had known and forced him in the direction of solitude, suffering, and sublimity. This inner crisis was perfectly timed with the larger crisis about him, yet the ingredients were pathetically simple. Goya, who had an iron constitution, underwent a shattering break in health which was to leave him totally deaf. There were those at the time who believed him a victim of venereal disease. The supposition is strengthened by the fate that overtook his children. There were at least five—legend credited twenty—but all except one son died young.

When Goya recovered, he continued to paint portraits, but they now became glimpses into psychological depths. Rembrandt guided him here. His color gradually faded, and his figures loomed in a dark uncertain limbo, remote from the light of day. And portraits were not enough. He painted the madhouse, and the dark fancies which pursued the emancipated rationalist of the eighteenth century. Deafness created for him a sort of outpost between two worlds, between sanity and madness. Deafness did for him what it did for Beethoven, whom he so much resembled in face and character. It set him in exalted isolation, a man apart from daily life.

In such bruised circumstances Goya still had his dignity. Yet his passionate nature threw even this to the winds. An old man, as the times went, and an afflicted one, Goya fell in love. It was no ordinary love for an ordinary woman. He was the intimate, and soon the victim, of the most dazzling and certainly the most capricious woman in Spain, the Duchess of Alba. He had to share her favors with bullfighters. What should have been an eighteenth-century exercise in vanity became bitter enslavement. He painted her many times, and he never gave up the portrait with "Goya" on the ring on her finger.

He could not castigate his mistress, but he could pillory the society of which she was the quintessence. At the Duchess' estate near Cadiz he began a sketchbook. In Madrid he filled another, and out of the sketches grew a series of etchings, *The Caprices*.



A BULLFIGHT
Lithograph. 1825
The Metropolitan Museum
of Art, New York



Begun as light satire, they developed into a scathing social indictment. They were published, immediately withdrawn, and given to the King when they caught the eye of the Inquisition.

Three more series of etchings were to follow. War overshadowed the latter part of Goya's life: he saw the carnage of the battlefield, the execution of prisoners, and famine; and he recorded man's brutality in *The Disasters of War*. These plates are unflinching in their magnificent veracity. They have an Olympian justice and pity, an earth-bound agony. It is not the terror of war but the terror of man's nature that is on display.

The *Bullfight* series illustrated a sport which threw its spell over Goya, Spaniard that he was. But the plates were more than illustrations. They were steeped in the Spaniard's communion with violence, courage, and death, and the bull became for Goya an obsessive symbol. Soon he launched into a final series, the so-called *Proverbs*, in which subconscious images take over the scene. Here Goya combines the tribal

language of witchcraft that must have frightened his childhood with the nightmare visions of his later years. He carries us to a surrealist level to find personifications for man's vanities, passions, and fears.

After the defeat of Napoleon, the young King Ferdinand returned. He cast a jaundiced eye on the painter who had adapted himself to the French occupation. Goya went into retirement, living in solitude with a cackling housekeeper whom he could not hear. And he painted his sinister and eerie "dark" pictures which parallel the mysterious *Proverbs*.

Goya was to die in exile. Civil war broke out as the King fought against the Constitution which he had been compelled to accept. Again blood flowed in Madrid, and Goya felt his seclusion to be inadequate protection. He gave away his home and crossed the Pyrenees to finish his long life among the expatriate Spaniards at Bordeaux. His daughter-in-law and grandchild came to pay him a reluctant visit, and the old man had a seizure from the "too great happiness"; he died of the stroke.



ONE WAY TO FLY
Etching from THE PROVERBS
 About 1810
 The Metropolitan Museum
 of Art, New York



BIG BOOBY
Etching from THE PROVERBS
 About 1810
 The Metropolitan Museum
 of Art, New York

PAINTED IN 1777

The Parasol

OIL ON CANVAS, 41 x 60"

THE PRADO, MADRID

WHEN GOYA WAS COMMISSIONED to paint subjects for the Royal Tapestry Factory, he was still a derivative painter. He was guided by the idyllic painting of the French, and he had an eye for Tiepolo, last of the great Venetians, who had come to Madrid to decorate the royal palace. But Goya had something of his own, too—the tang of veracity. He had undertaken to furnish a backdrop for an aristocratic illusion, but something native and vital—the beat of the sun and the warmth of the eye—kept creeping in.

Great changes were in store, yet all his life Goya sought the same thing: the truth as he saw it. In his youth he found it gleaming innocently on the surface. Later he pursued it deep in the nature of man.



PAINTED IN 1784

Don Manuel Osorio de Zuñiga

OIL ON CANVAS, 50 ¾ x 40"

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK
(*The Jules S. Bache Collection, 1949*)

GOYA RECALLED A BITTERLY POOR CHILDHOOD, and he sought wealth, success, and prestige with a defensive ravenousness. Suddenly courted and befriended by the rulers of Spain, he was defiantly ill at ease in the presence of these graces and powers. Yet he was completely disarmed by the presence of a child, and he painted children as tenderly as if they were his own.

Don Manuel Osorio de Zuñiga reaches out to us dressed in his resplendent best. If his toys are live birds and the cats are watching, he cannot help it. He is a prisoner too, Goya seems to say. Later, in the sardonic etchings, cats will personify sinister impulses; but for the moment Goya's vision is as direct and innocent as his young subject's, and the cats are only pets.



PAINTED ABOUT 1785-88

The Marquesa de Pontejos

OIL ON CANVAS, 83 x 49 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, D. C.
(*Mellon Collection*)

GOYA'S CAREER AS A PORTRAITIST began with his painting of the Prime Minister Floridablanca. When he painted the Minister's sister-in-law, the Marquesa de Pontejos, he was just mastering the grand manner. He was still taking refuge (like his subject) in the perfection of surfaces; and the treatment of the gown, the limpid color, and the silvery-gray tonalities leave nothing to be desired. The Marquesa is making the most of the family's temporary elevation: the flower and crooked finger, the silver bells at the pug dog's collar fit the extravagance of her appearance. When Goya comes to the Marquesa herself, an uneasy duel takes place. Her expression is hard, tight, and warning; and the painter, still trying to please, cautiously suppresses the honesty of his vision.



PAINTED ABOUT 1797-99

The Maja Clothed

OIL ON CANVAS, 37½ x 75½"

THE PRADO, MADRID

THE TWIN CANVASES, *The Maja Clothed* and *The Maja Nude* (next plate), show us the same young woman in identical poses. Legend, intoxicated with Goya's love for the Duchess of Alba, long indulged and embroidered the fancy that this was she. But the features are not hers and the paintings are the more disturbing for their anonymity. In convention-ridden Spain the unsequestered young woman, the *maja*, was more than a prostitute. Her extravagant, provocative costume as she flitted, all concealment and black lace, through the lampless streets, the very risk and fatality of her existence, made her something of a heroine—a symbol of daring and freedom.

Goya's expert yet casual technique now echoes the casualness of his subject. By brushing together forms and losing outlines he gives an illusion of breathing, of the possibility of motion. A warm dark ground provides body for the fluid, translucent paint. He is at his best with silvery whites and iridescent silks, with rose flesh that melts into gray.



PAINTED ABOUT 1797-99

The Maja Nude

OIL ON CANVAS, 38 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 74 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

THE PRADO, MADRID

THE NUDE IS ALMOST NONEXISTENT in Spanish art. Velazquez has a single example, turned away, mitigated by the fancy that she is Venus. Nudes in Italian and French painting are indulgence clothed in literature or myth. But Goya confronts the spectator with available woman. Goya was at once furiously sensual and drastically moral, and the two paintings raise the masculine question: What has taken place, where is the blame, what is the difference, before and after?

The young woman with her unswerving gaze offers no answer and leaves us with the sense that she is unreachable. Her unsecret body, her secret mind, throw out a challenge with which Goya was all too familiar. She was painted while the Duchess of Alba was still alive.



PAINTED IN 1800

The Family of Charles IV

OIL ON CANVAS, 110¼ x 132¼"

THE PRADO, MADRID

THE YEAR 1792 BROUGHT in a new reign, and Goya was summoned to design decorations for the coronation of Charles IV and his Queen, Maria Luisa. A decade of fantastic misrule coincided with a palace success for the artist. As a culmination of ducal and royal patronage, he painted a group portrait of the royal family. He showed these people as they were: The King massive, genial, muddleheaded; the Queen licentious and haggard; Ferdinand, the Prince of Asturias, misshapen; and the younger child with the features of the Queen's lover, Godoy. Incredibly, his royal patrons were pleased. Goya looked beneath the surface without destroying it, and his subjects saw only their silks, their jewels, and their rank.

Here as elsewhere, Goya is flattered to inject his own figure (in the background at left), shrewdly at work in the shadow of the great.



Detail: The Family of Charles IV

MARIA LUISA WAS A QUEEN ravenous for power in an age and country which allowed only two or three women of the highest rank (the Duchess of Alba among them) to achieve independence. With her weak-willed husband as a tool, the Queen fancied herself a political figure, even at first a liberal one, but she was far from understanding that authority must be curtailed if freedom is to be encouraged. Hypocritical concessions alternated with panicky suppressions, and endless vacillations of policy only added up to fumbling and defeat. Maria Luisa was thrown back on an aggression which she at least understood: a defiantly sensual life. Her desires finally fixed on Emanuel Godoy, her soldier-of-fortune lover who shared her political ineptitude. Between them they ruined a kingdom and were Napoleon's dupes, as the King was theirs.

Here the Queen glitters, and poses as an imperious mother with innocence in either hand. Fiercely alive, she dominates court and canvas, and her gimlet eye sees everything but the impression she creates: she has no realization how transparent she is to her subjects and to Goya.



PAINTED ABOUT 1805

Woman in Gray

OIL ON CANVAS, 40½ x 32⅝"

THE LOUVRE, PARIS

IN SPAIN THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN a sense of form, of dignity and decorum, of vitality constrained. In costume, this expresses itself in grays and blacks. Goya's early portraits show us the nobility following the fashion of the French court. The women—with some added reticence—are in the costume of Marie Antoinette. In the portrait of this young woman in gray the costume again follows the French lead. At some remove it is Directoire, with its low cut, its high waist. Even the casual dressing of the natural hair is nineteenth-century. The hated French Revolution has come and gone and worked its release.

But for all that the young woman in the uncomfortable ladder-back chair is assured rather than liberated: at least she knows precisely who and where she is, which is one of the consolations under an autocracy.

Goya's early portraits could be stiff—either the sitter was arthritic with rank or the painter was young and overawed. His latest portraits tend to be deeply and tragically personal. There is a middle period when Goya still sees quite objectively, and paints with the airiest freedom and assurance. His most fortunate subjects are his women sitters—younger women whose physical maturity is ahead of their experience of life. They are ready for whatever a narrow convention will allow them, and a portrait by Goya, the court painter, is no small experience in their lives.



PAINTED ABOUT 1810-15

Majas on a Balcony

OIL ON CANVAS, 76¾ x 49½"

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK

(Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929. The H. O. Havemeyer Collection)

THIS MAGNIFICENT CANVAS, a major achievement in scale and execution, gives us a romantic spectacle related to the etchings of *The Caprices*, but devoid of their satire and disapprobation. Goya is older, he has suffered, and he has no need to scold a new generation.

The *maja* needed to see and be seen; whether at the bull ring, the theater, or from a balcony. She needed to be escorted and companioned, and two women together created the illusion of propriety. Her escort, her masculine counterpart, was the quarrel-seeking *majo*. His cloak, thrown across a shoulder, concealed a ready blade and muffled him to the eyes that lowered beneath his hat. In Goya's youth a jaded society showered its perverse favors on the *majo* and aped the dress of the *maja*. That society had withered, but *majo* and *maja* lived on. Her employment was as stable as his idleness; and they continued to contemplate, and embellish, the spectacle of life itself.



PAINTED ABOUT 1814

Preaching Monk

OIL ON CANVAS, 12½ x 8¼"

BAVARIAN STATE PAINTING COLLECTIONS, MUNICH

GOYA, THE MASTER OF THE SOLITARY FIGURE, became in his latter days a master in organizing groups. Perhaps he had learned this through his etchings, where he achieved his effects through lights and darks caught together by line. Living in an era of tragic forces, he could see people as puppets, but puppets who suffer, hope, and pray. With his diffuse and Olympian compassion he sorted people out according to their impulses and employments. Here typically he leaves individuals in their native obscurity to give us a portrait of prayer and prostration. To what extent is this portrait of prostration satirical? Goya did not bow his head easily, and his gradual and begrudging surrender became the central drama of his old age.

It is his capacity to personify deep emotion which makes Goya arresting to the modern mind. His means are perfectly adapted to his purpose, for he is portraying something generalized and shared, which is intense yet obscure, fluid, and imprecise.



PAINTED AFTER 1814

The Second of May

OIL ON CANVAS, 104½ x 135⅞"

THE PRADO, MADRID

THE SECOND AND THIRD OF MAY, 1808, are dramatic dates in Spanish history. They open the Spanish chapter of the Napoleonic Wars; more than any other dates they foreshadow Napoleon's fall.

The Emperor intruded into Spanish politics under pretext of patching a quarrel in the royal family. He lured out of the country the King, Queen, and the Crown Prince who had declared himself King, only to force an abdication. Meanwhile his general, Murat, occupied Madrid.

The Spanish people, uneasy as the last of the royal children were about to be spirited away, spontaneously attacked the French troops. Years later Goya recorded this unequal combat between the citizens of Madrid and the mamelukes of Murat. Ironically, this tumultuous canvas—with its North African vocabulary of Moor, scimitar, and plunging horse—anticipates the romantic movement in French art.



PAINTED AFTER 1814

The Third of May

OIL ON CANVAS, 104½ x 135⅞"

THE PRADO, MADRID

FOLLOWING THE UPRISING AGAINST the French troops on the Second of May, 1808, General Murat exacted drastic reprisals. For a day and a night, firing squads were busy. The act was neither forgotten nor forgiven. The French, welcomed as liberators a few weeks earlier, became the sworn enemies of the whole Spanish people. The Spaniard values many things more than life, and for years the country was steeped in blood.

Goya, a close witness, recorded the beginnings of the national ordeal in the day of victory. The great canvas transcends realism. This is all military brutality. The soldiers in the squad are puppets in no particular uniform, as helpless as the victims who accept their murder with childlike gestures of submission or defiance.



PAINTED ABOUT 1819-23

Detail: The Witches' Sabbath

MURAL TRANSFERRED TO CANVAS, 55 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 172 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

THE PRADO, MADRID

MEDIEVAL SUPERSTITIONS, the belief in witchcraft and in forbidden powers granted at a terrible price, were too powerful to be exorcized by the freethinking rationalism of the eighteenth century. Doubtless recalled from Goya's earliest provincial childhood, they arose to give a familiar pattern to the disquieting imaginings of his isolated mind. *The Witches' Sabbath* is typical of these so-called "dark paintings" which came out of Goya's six-year solitude in the "deaf man's house"—an exile in spirit to be followed by an exile in fact.

Goya lived among these strange and troubled canvases, hanging them in his two main rooms—around his dining-room table—as if to make sure that they were not hallucinations, that they were no more than paint.



PAINTED IN 1826-27

The Milkmaid of Bordeaux

OIL ON CANVAS, 29 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 26 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

THE PRADO, MADRID

GOYA'S BEGINNINGS WERE HUMBLE, close to the earth. His ambitions never alienated him from common humanity, and the longer he lived the simpler he became. In his old age, when he roused himself from the depression which hung over his solitude, he painted a series of vital figure pieces which were a sort of tribute to human dignity, a gesture of faith. One imagines him seizing a brush when he saw a candidate for a painting fit to banish his pessimism. Such is *The Milkmaid of Bordeaux*.

She was one of his very last subjects, painted during his exile in France. Goya's emotions were a great fire which died down to ashes only to flare up at a breath again and again. It is *The Milkmaid* who is Goya's farewell response to womankind.



FRONTISPIECE:

PAINTED ABOUT 1808



Señora Sabasa Garcia

OIL ON CANVAS, 28 x 23"

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, D. C.
(Mellon Collection)

IN 1808 GOYA PAINTED Don Evaristo Perez de Castro Garcia, who later became a prime minister of Spain. Sabasa Garcia was his niece. There is a legend that Goya, struck by her beauty and charm, painted her portrait and gave it to her. If uncle and niece were painted at the same time, she was only eighteen when she received the fabulous present. But perhaps she was older; the canvas has the intensity and low key of Goya's later work.

In any case, this is one of Goya's finest portraits. Here he captures a peculiarly intense mixture of modesty and fervor. To paint speaking eyes was Goya's great gift. Sabasa Garcia, well-bred young woman that she is, has a restricted if passionate view of life; and she lives in her eyesight.



ON PAGE 7:

PAINTED ABOUT 1826

Self-Portrait in a Tall Hat

OIL ON CANVAS, 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ X 18"

KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM, VIENNA

IT IS A THEOLOGICAL QUESTION how mind penetrates matter, and a portrait by a great artist raises the question all over again. The painter at least tells us that the miracle need not be gradual—it can happen in an instant. He is only capturing a little reflected light on a dark ground: he sees a puffy, bruised area under the shadow of a hat, touches the corner of an eye, and a personality moves in. He is only painting broad light and shade, but whatever he touches lives.

The canvas reflects the painter in his extreme old age. He is painting as artists would begin to paint half a century later. Such terms as Impressionism, much less Expressionism, had yet to be hit upon, but what they describe was already here: the disciplined effort to see light and color as things in themselves, the impulse—or genius—to unsterilize that effort and impregnate it with personality.

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